It Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

it for a moment. When it had passed we saw also a flock of rain-drenched sheep tightly huddled together. Two huge dogs, barking furiously, challenged our approach. From near the fire came a clear female voice: "Who is there?"

Using my wet hands as a speaking-trumpet, I shouted against the wind as loudly as I could: "Friends!"

"And who is with you?"

"Only God," I replied.

"His countenance be upon you, and peace," the voice answered.

A Bedouin maiden stepped forth from a diminutive tent, calling her dogs to heel, as Faris and I dismounted. She took our horses, placed before them a bowl of milk, and gave us permission to come to the fire. It crackled cheerily, though heavy raindrops were still falling, filling the air with acrid smoke. The pigmy habitation beside the fire hardly deserved the name of tent: it was a single piece of coarse goat-hair cloth, a mere rain-screen, at most affording precarious shelter to the shepherdess and her dogs. A lamb and its mother, which had a broken leg, had taken refuge in it. I set and bound the limb with a few twigs and a gauze bandage, the girl meanwhile watching my manipulations with eager eyes.

She must have been sixteen years of age—a beautiful creature, mature, and lithe, like all Bedouin women. Healthy blood glowed in her sun-bronzed cheeks. Her thick, smooth hair and the high-bridged nose betokened the pure-bred Ishmaelite.

In accordance with the immemorial custom of the

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Dubiya, a Friend of Tabisa

Mavis, a Friend of Tabisa

Annie, the Mother of Paris

Tabisa

opposite page 33

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

splendid figures, and they walked straight, with swaying hips, even under the heavy loads they carried. The long trains of their blue gowns trailed behind them on the sand, but the front was gathered high enough—but only just high enough—about a hand's breadth—to give them freedom in walking.

Eleven days of leisurely travelling brought us next to al-Khor, low-lying country pitted with rain pools, south of the Jabal Enaza. There Faris and I parted from our fellow travellers and rode westward to the boundary of the Hamad (gravel steppe) and the Harra (flint desert), making for a *wadi* in the neighbourhood of the Jabal Umm Wual. Darkness fell upon us in the lowlands, but on the higher levels of the Harra enough daylight lingered for us to see ahead. I pulled up Maha, for a fairy scene was spread out before me—the encampment of the Ruala at evening.

After seeing nothing but the empty wilderness, day after day and weeks on end—nothing but the sky and solitude—there suddenly appeared to us a city of tents! Smoke rose from thousands of black dwellings, and in between, large camel-herds, hundreds of them, were wending their way home.

At last we were at home again. Seven hundred and fifty miles in the saddle lay behind us, through the virgin desert of the Hamad and the Nufud; and I had brought back a priceless store of unforgettable memories.

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Front and Profile Views of Pygmy
Ibo Mask, Shamanic Chief

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2:Musil S-4,5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

in constant fear and therefore keep a sharp lookout all the time. In the same manner the daughter of Ebeu Kuṭṭân watches for danger from the enemy and wishes that her lover may always be ready to go to her assistance.

La'ujûn min labes al-ḥarîr
ûukrun ḏurâjeh rîsche
w-eljo' talâkuw bel-wa'ed
w-aš-šeiḫ bimeḥâseha.

For the eyes of her who wears a silk garment
And has braids of fair hair!
When men shall meet in the fight appointed by Allâh,
The chief himself will be the first on the battle ground.

The daughters and wives of the chiefs wear silk kerchiefs. Fair hair is rare among the Rwala women; they generally dye it. Our beauty with braids of fair hair has a suitor in the person of the chief himself, who therefore hastens to her aid when the migrating clan is attacked and fights on the battle ground before her eyes. *Wa'ed* is a fight ordained by Allâh himself. *Maḥâs* means the place of an encounter, a battle ground.

Arḫaṣt 'omrî w-el-faras
dûn al-ǧemel w-elli 'alejh
jâ-bu ḫrûn ûuha-l-maras
ḳalbi muštâḳeu 'alejh.

I ris'ked my life and my mare
Before the camel and her who sat on him.
For her with braids like this rope,
My heart is longing for her.

Kûl ǧoum 'ajdeu lal-baudt
w-al-joum hâḏa 'ajdeua
narmi-al-'aša lal-ḥâjemât
lal-'ujûn min teridaua.

Every day is a holiday for the girls,
But this day is a holiday for us,
As we shall throw a supper to the birds of prey
For the eyes of her who longs for us.

The girls sing, amuse themselves, and turn the heads of the young men every day, but the youths show them their real qualities on the day when they repulse a hostile raid.